

REMARKS

This response to the Office Action of 12/26/2006 is accompanied by a Declaration by the present inventor, which is referred to below.

The present invention is directed to a moulded plastic container for a predetermined plurality of CD discs, the container comprising a plurality of identical container segments, each incorporating hinge elements that enable rapid detachable connection of the segments as a closed container, and ready detachment in side-by-side serially connected relation or as individual segments, in both instances each segment having the capability of independently displaying that predetermined number of discs. The hinge/connection of the present invention consists of a pair of hemispherical male elements located on the outer surfaces of one pair of flexible tab portions, located exteriorly of the container interior, to engage (or disengage) a pair of recesses in the exteriorly located flexible tab portions of an adjoining container segment, by simple inward compression of the (male) tab portions, enabling their connection/disconnection with the apertures located in a like pair of tab portions of an adjoining segment.

Gellert teaches the use of deformable 'live' plastic hinges with his casing, which are clearly not intended for optional disconnection of his casing segments.

To paraphrase the language of the Declaration of the present inventor, presented herewith, in the case of Goof (US5,156,289), his dental instrument container has "pairs of bulbs 28, 30 " (col 3 lines 39-45) which appear to form the hinges, that are held together by way of separate pins or plugs (not numbered); see "*and an appropriate pin or plug can be inserted through each such pair of bulbs*" (Col 3, lines 44-45).

Figure 4 of Goof shows his 'bulbs' 28, 30 located at opposite ends of his lamellar part, and inset a short distance from the end "bulb or bead" (Col 3 lines 36-37) 24, 26, such

that when two segments are brought edge to edge the perforated hinge portions 28, 30 can be aligned with the perforated hinge portions 36, 34, and the requisite pin or plug can be inserted. See Col 3, lines 39-45. Thus it can clearly be seen that the recesses 32 are provided simply to accommodate the bulbs 28, 30, and the recesses 38 accommodate the bulbs 34, 36 (Col 3 lines 39-45) thus enabling the alignment of the apertures of bulbs 28, 30 with the apertures of "bulb or beads 34, 36" so that the essential hinge pin or plug can be inserted, to enable pivoting or to serve as a closure. It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner is in error in attributing to the recesses 32 a role as a female hinge portion. The recesses 32 merely accommodate the bulbs 28, 30; the recesses 38 accommodate the bulbs 34, 36; so that the required hinge pins can be inserted in the aligned apertures of parts 36 aligned to 28, and 30 aligned to 34.

It is quite evident that the hinge pin is an essential integer of Goof's illustrated hinge, and forms the axis about which his lamellar parts rotate.

It is to be noted that the Goof structure illustrated in Figure 4 is essentially rigid and is not deformed in any way in order to bring the hinge elements 36, 28 and 30, 34 into alignment for the insertion of the two required hinge pins or plugs. There is clearly no hinging relationship between the bulbs 28, 30 and the recesses 32. The recesses 32 merely enable two adjoined segments to be fully opened, when the bulbs 28, 30 would otherwise interfere with the adjoining wall.

Goof also talks of his hinge means being replaced by other permanent or disconnectable hinge means, which however, are not shown or described.

Goof relies upon his unmarked "pins or plugs" to form his hinges, which pins or plugs are not an integral part of his enclosure, and have to be inserted or removed to enable connection/disconnection. This clearly removes Goof outside the language of claim 1.

This is not an immaterial difference, as the subject "substantially identical segments" are moulded in the same injection mould, which is a significant economic aspect of their being generated, as part of a demonstration of portable moulding, and as a fully functional product, while Goof discloses a mutually adjoined hinge arrangement that clearly relies upon the insertion or removal of hinge pins or their equivalent, in order to function, so that the necessary insertion or removal of the Goof hinge pins clearly denies the capability for rapid connection/disconnection as taught and made possible by the presently disclosed container.

Goof's other hinge arrangement, 14 (Column 2 line 51), is so indefinite in his disclosure as to be meaningless.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the further limitation and clarification that the hinge means are located outside the enclosure of the container.

Claim 13 has been amended to further clarify that the location of the flexible (hinge) tabs is external to the interior of the container. Goof has no such flexible tabs, his structure being substantially rigid, relative to his "bulbs 28, 30" on account of the enclosing end portions 24, 26, which serve to rigidify the end portions of his structure.. Furthermore, there is absolutely no teaching by Goof of a flexible arrangement of hinge tabs to enable virtually instantaneous attachment/disengagement between adjacent casing segments, as taught in the present application.

It is respectfully submitted that the cited Goof reference is inappropriate to the subject application, and the Goof and Gellert references, taken singly or in combination cannot

achieve the purposes of the present invention. Furthermore, they are silent in regard to such teaching, and may not be construed as leading one skilled in the art in the direction of the present invention

Consideration of the claims with a view to their allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

D. Eggins.
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